



PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM



MASTER OF MEDICAL SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES



Fayetteville, N.C. | methodist.edu/paprogram

MASTER OF MEDICAL SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

PROGRAM HISTORY

The Methodist University Physician Assistant (PA) program became the third established PA program in the state of North Carolina in April 1996. Methodist University (formerly Methodist College) graduated its first Physician Assistant class in May 1998. In April 2000, Methodist University voted to approve the transition of the PA Program from a bachelor's level to a master's level program and admitted its first master's level class in August 2001. Since its inception, the program has prepared more than 500 graduates for clinical practice, with more than half entering into primary care medicine.

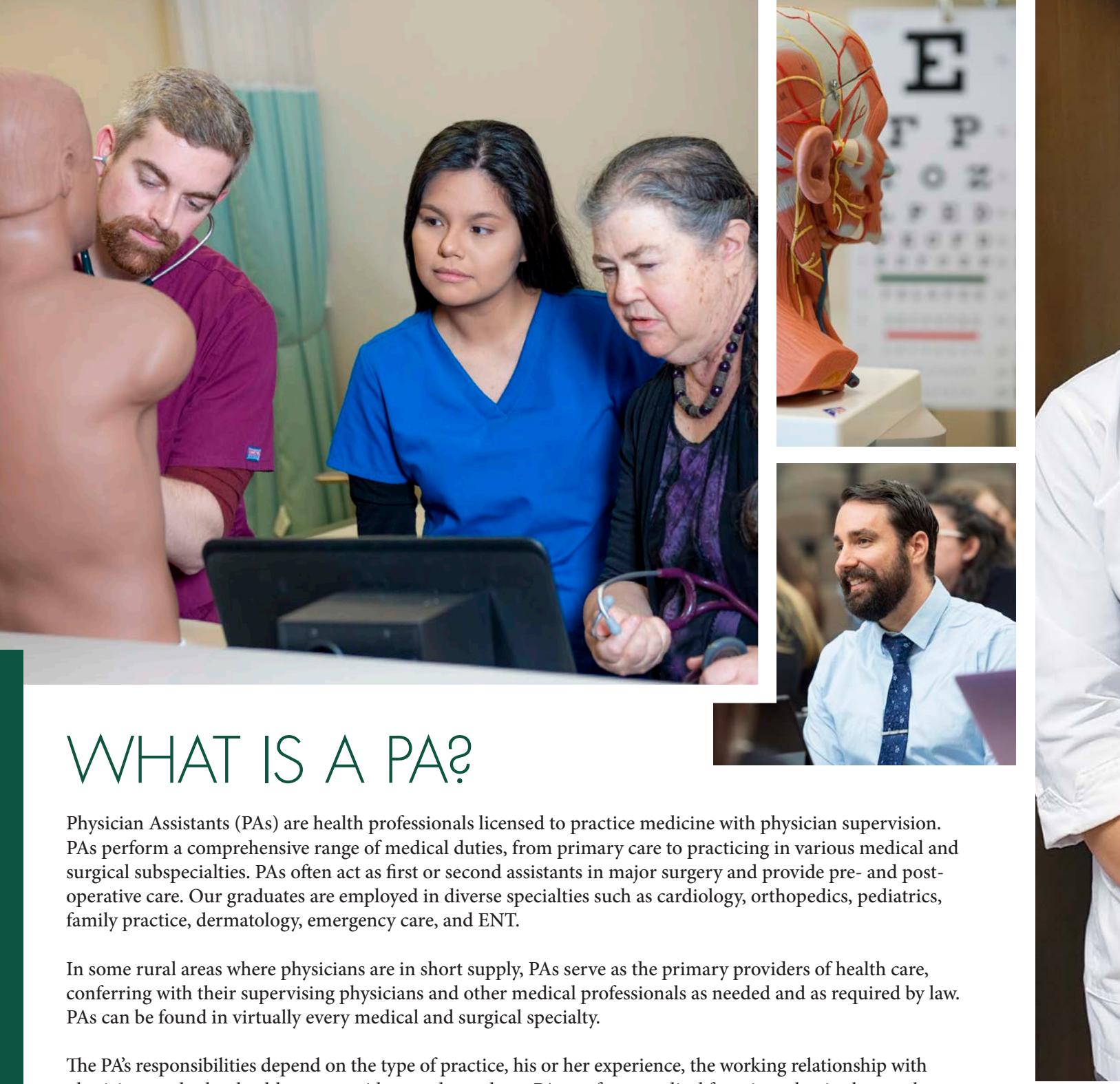
The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation - Continued to the Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Methodist University. Continued Accreditation is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards. Continued Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards.





"The MU PA Program has met and exceeded every expectation that I originally held of an ideal PA program. The rigorous coursework gave way to an overall unparalleled academic experience."

— Meagan Parsons, Class of 2013
Rockingham, N.C.



WHAT IS A PA?

Physician Assistants (PAs) are health professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. PAs perform a comprehensive range of medical duties, from primary care to practicing in various medical and surgical subspecialties. PAs often act as first or second assistants in major surgery and provide pre- and post-operative care. Our graduates are employed in diverse specialties such as cardiology, orthopedics, pediatrics, family practice, dermatology, emergency care, and ENT.

In some rural areas where physicians are in short supply, PAs serve as the primary providers of health care, conferring with their supervising physicians and other medical professionals as needed and as required by law. PAs can be found in virtually every medical and surgical specialty.

The PA's responsibilities depend on the type of practice, his or her experience, the working relationship with physicians and other health care providers, and state laws. PAs perform medical functions that in the past have been performed by licensed physicians, including but not limited to:

- ◆ Taking medical histories
- ◆ Ordering laboratory tests
- ◆ Performing physical exams
- ◆ Treating illnesses
- ◆ Counseling patients
- ◆ Promoting wellness
- ◆ Diagnosing illnesses
- ◆ Assisting in surgery

Physician Assistants have a long-standing tradition of serving in areas of need, providing care to those who might otherwise have little or no access to quality health care. PAs work everywhere, from remote rural settings to major urban centers, in doctors' offices, hospitals, clinics, HMOs, the armed forces, and other federal government agencies.

Adapted from the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), www.aapa.org.



***“Choosing to attend
Methodist University’s
PA Program is one of
the best decisions I’ve
ever made.”***

ALUMNI TESTIMONY

Choosing to attend Methodist University’s PA Program is one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I was a single mother and commuted about an hour from my home in Pembroke, N.C. during my time at Methodist. The program faculty/staff along with my family definitely helped me to juggle all of the tasks of being a mom and PA student. The whole program was like a big family. The staff and faculty are truly there for the students and want you to succeed.

Since graduating, I can truly say the rigors of the program prepared me to feel comfortable working in primary and urgent care settings. The training I received as a PA student at Methodist prepared me to be more than capable of providing excellent care to the citizens of Robeson County. I worked at shelters during both Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Florence. I spent many days and nights working hard to help evacuees get the medications they needed, address their immediate health concerns, and give them any comfort I could provide. I feel that Methodist instilled in me the importance of not only being a competent medical provider, but also having a good bedside manner and treating patients with respect.

My advisor and the director of the PA Program, Dr. Christina Perry, was one of my biggest influences during and even after PA school. I do not think I have ever seen Dr. Perry without a smile on her face. She loves her job and works tirelessly to make sure Methodist’s PA Program is one of the best in the country. I hope to follow in Dr. Perry’s footsteps and one day work as an educator to future physician assistants. I would advise anyone looking to become a physician assistant to definitely put Methodist at the top of your list.

Leslie Lovette, PA-C, Class of 2012, Pembroke, N.C.

PA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATION

A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university is required. No specific degree is required. An overall GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended.

COURSEWORK

Microbiology with lab	4 semester hours
Anatomy and Physiology with lab	8 semester hours
One additional human/animal biology course*	3 semester hours
Organic Chemistry I with lab	4 semester hours
Biochemistry**	3 semester hours
Statistics	3 semester hours
One psychology course	3 semester hours
Medical Terminology***	1 semester

*Genetics is recommended, but other courses that will fulfill the requirement are: Principles/Foundations of Biology, Cell Physiology, Cell Biology, etc. No ecology, nutrition, or physical education courses.

**Biochemistry and Organic Chemistry may not be combined into one course

***Applicants must receive a grade or Pass/Fail credit for Medical Terminology. CME credit or a certificate in Medical Terminology is not acceptable.

NOTES ABOUT COURSEWORK

- ◆ A prerequisite GPA of 3.2 or higher is recommended.
- ◆ All coursework must be completed with a letter grade of C or better. However, if accepted, any outstanding coursework must be completed with a letter grade of B- or higher.
- ◆ All coursework must be completed in the United States and through a regionally accredited institution.
- ◆ There are no time restrictions on the prerequisite coursework, but if courses were taken more than 5 years ago, applicants should consider retaking some course(s) as a refresher.
- ◆ Applicants may apply to the program if there is outstanding coursework, but must be in-progress or have a plan in place to complete the outstanding coursework by the program's start date.
- ◆ No substitutions or exceptions will be granted for coursework.
- ◆ It is recommended that all coursework be completed at the university level.

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

An applicant is not eligible to apply if he/she has:

- ◆ A history of drug abuse or conviction of a felony
- ◆ Dismissal from a PA or another medical program (e.g. medical, nursing, physical therapy program, etc.)
- ◆ Attended a foreign or domestic medical school and achieved below an overall 3.0 GPA and/or has a history of failure(s) on the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)

The program does not allow auditing of any course, transfer credits, or advanced placement (exemption) from any course based on previous education or experience.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

In addition to the other prerequisite requirements, applicants who have completed their degree outside of the United States must:

- ◆ Submit foreign transcripts for evaluation of degree equivalency to the World Education Services (WES). If the evaluation determines the foreign degree to be equivalent to a bachelor's degree or higher in the United States, the applicant has completed the bachelor's degree requirement.
- ◆ Have achieved an overall GPA of 3.0 and have no history of failures on the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), if he/she attend a foreign medical school. The program will use the WES calculated GPA.
- ◆ Complete all prerequisite coursework in the United States regardless if the applicant has already completed the same courses in a foreign country. There are no exceptions to this policy.
- ◆ Submit Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL) scores. TOEFL scores of 570 (PBT), 230 (CBT), 100 (IBT) are required.



MU PA CLASS OF 2019

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

A minimum of 500 hours of clinical experience is required prior to matriculation. The purpose of clinical experience is to allow for exposure to how the healthcare system works and to gain an understanding of the PA profession. Having direct patient contact is valuable to helping applicants establish a comfort level when working with patients and other members of the medical team.

THE PROGRAM CONSIDERS HOURS IN TWO TIERS:

- ◆ “Tier one” hours are defined as positions that have direct patient contact and are normally paid positions.
- ◆ “Tier two” hours are defined as hours that have limited or no patient contact, but are somewhat relevant to an applicant’s preparation for PA school and the PA profession. Only 250 hours of “tier two” hours will be counted towards the 500 hour requirement.

Applicants must have all 500 hours completed at the time of application.

The program is not responsible for assisting applicants with finding places of employment, shadowing opportunities, certifications, etc. It is the responsibility of the applicant to arrange their own clinical experience.

ACCEPTABLE CLINICAL WORK*:

Tier One Hours

- ◆ Emergency medical technician (EMT)
- ◆ Athletic trainer
- ◆ Paramedic
- ◆ Emergency Room technician
- ◆ Certified nursing assistant (CNA)
- ◆ Patient care tech
- ◆ Military medic
- ◆ Surgical technician
- ◆ Respiratory technician
- ◆ Nurse
- ◆ Scribe
- ◆ Phlebotomy

Tier Two Hours

- ◆ Certified laboratory technician
- ◆ Shadowing (PA, NP, MD/DO)
- ◆ Pharmacy technician

**The program reserves the right to designate hours into tier one or two as it deems appropriate.*



GRADUATE RECORD EXAM (GRE)

The GRE General Test measures verbal, quantitative, and analytical skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field. The MU PA program requires only the GRE for admission and scores must be within 5 years of application to the program. No applicant is exempt from submitting GRE scores regardless of previous education or experience. GRE scores must be sent directly to CASPA via code 0399. The MU PA program recommends a combined verbal and quantitative score of 297 or higher. Applicants may visit gre.org for assistance obtaining tutorials or workbooks.

APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicants to the Methodist University PA Program must apply through the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). The CASPA cycle opens in April of each year, 16 months in advance of our August start date. Visit our website for specific opening dates/deadlines.

Because the program operates on rolling admissions, it is possible that our class can be filled prior to the deadline. Once your application has been submitted, it can take up to four weeks from that date for it to be verified. Applicants who wait to apply later in the cycle may miss their chance of being considered.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

All applicants must have three letters of professional recommendation submitted with their CASPA application. Letters should be submitted from:

- ♦ A professor or advisor within the science department.
- ♦ A medical supervisor or coworker. If shadowing a PA, they should write the letter on behalf of the applicant.
- ♦ Another supervisor or medical coworker.



INTERVIEW PROCESS

Selected applicants must participate in a successful on-campus interview with the Admissions Selection Committee to be accepted. Interviews begin a year in advance of the start date and continue on a monthly basis until the class is filled. Through a series of program interactions and individual interviews, applicants will be assessed on non-cognitive factors such as, but not limited to: understanding of the role of the PA, compatibility with the program and profession, professionalism, communication, ethical decision making, problem solving, teachability, and critical thinking skills.

"The welcoming nature of Methodist University's PA program played a vital role in my decision to attend. The level of commitment and excellence displayed by the faculty is unrivaled, as I am confident that they have provided me with the tools necessary to become a competent clinician and ultimately fulfill my dream of providing patient-centered care while making a positive difference in my community."

Jonathan Smith, Jr., Class of 2020
Atlanta, Ga.



CURRICULUM

The PA program has one start date a year in August. The program is 27 months (7 semesters) in length and consists of two phases: Didactic and Clinical. Course/Rotation scheduling and names listed below are examples and are subject to additions/changes/deletions at any time based on curriculum evaluation. For specific course listings, please visit our website under "Curriculum."

DIDACTIC PHASE-3.5 SEMESTERS

The didactic year is the first 3.5 semesters of classroom instruction and is held on the campus of Methodist University. The following semester breakdown is an example of the didactic phase:

Fall Semester I

Emergency Medicine I
Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
History and Physical Exam I
Anatomy I (Cadaver dissection)
Medical Ethics
PA Orientation I
Pharmacology I
Physiology
Urology/Nephrology

Summer Semester

Clinical Skills I
Dermatology
Geriatrics
Hematology
Lab Medicine II
Neurology
OB/GYN
Oncology
Pharmacotherapy
Pulmonology
Surgery

Spring Semester

Anatomy II (Cadaver dissection)
Behavioral Medicine
Cardiology
Emergency Medicine II
Endocrinology
Gastroenterology
History and Physical Exam II
Infectious Disease
Lab Medicine I
Pediatrics
Pharmacology II

Fall Semester II

Clinical Skills II
Critical Thinking
ENT
History & Physical Exam III
Ophthalmology
Orthopedics
Research Methods*
**The capstone project is completed within the Research Methods course.*



CLINICAL YEAR-3.5 SEMESTERS

The Clinical Phase is the final 3.5 semesters and consists of supervised, off-campus clinical instruction. Clinical rotations are generally arranged within Cumberland County and surrounding areas at local medical centers and private doctor's offices. The majority of rotations are within a 75-mile radius of campus, but students may be expected to complete at least one rotation outside of this radius. Students may accrue additional housing expenses. Clinical rotations required by the program are as follows:

Rotation	Length
Elective I	5 weeks
Elective II.....	5 weeks
Emergency Medicine.....	5 weeks
Family Medicine	5 weeks
General Surgery	5 weeks
Internal Medicine.....	5 weeks
OB/Gyn	5 weeks
Orthopedics.....	3 weeks
Pediatrics	5 weeks
Primary Care.....	5 weeks
Psychiatry	2 weeks



CADAVER LABORATORY

The human anatomy laboratory at Methodist is a critical component of the first and second semesters' Physician Assistant curriculum. The Gross Anatomy course is designed to provide a working knowledge of human anatomy, an understanding of physiology, disease processes, diagnostic radiology, surgical and traumatic conditions, and interventional therapy. PA students have described the course as an "invaluable" and "irreplaceable" experience, and PA faculty members believe this anatomy laboratory builds a strong foundation for the MU Physician Assistant Program and its outstanding success.



"I gained a great deal during my time as a student in the Methodist University Physician Assistant Program – both expected and unexpected. I expected to gain the knowledge and skills I needed to become a great medical provider. I did not expect to gain the amazing relationships I developed with my peers and MUPAP staff. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at MUPAP and I continue to enjoy all that I gained from the program."

Tod Frazer, Class of 2019
Rockingham, N.C.



PANCE PASS RATE

The MU Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) pass rates for first-time takers compare favorably with the national rates. MU's PANCE scores for the previous five years may be viewed on our website under "PANCE Pass Rates."





WHY METHODIST UNIVERSITY?

- ◆ Strong support from local medical community.
- ◆ Employment of physician assistants is expected to increase 30 percent from 2010 to 2020, much faster than the average for other occupations.
- ◆ Cadaver Lab: Cadaver dissection is a critical and unique component of our PA program.
- ◆ A small class size allows faculty to build a close, personal relationships with each student.
- ◆ Performance on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) compares favorably with national rates.



Scan this code to learn more about the Physician Assistant Program at MU!



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Jennifer Mish

Director, PA Program Admissions & Alumni Development
jmish@methodist.edu

910.630.7615 or 800.488-7110, Ext. 7615

Methodist University Physician Assistant Program
5107 College Center Dr., Fayetteville, N.C. 28311
www.methodist.edu/paprogram

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

- ◆ American Academy of Physician Assistants
aapa.org
- ◆ Physician Assistant Education Association
paeaonline.org
- ◆ National Commission on Certification of PAs
nccpa.net
- ◆ Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA)
arc-pa.org
- ◆ North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants
ncapa.org